1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT	
2	SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS HOUSTON DIVISION	
3	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA . CR	2. NO. H-09-259 DUSTON, TEXAS
4	VS	·
5	ARNOLDO MALDONADO . 11	PTEMBER 25, 2009 .:20 A.M. to 11:45 A.M.
6		
7	TRANSCRIPT OF REARRAIGNMENT BEFORE THE HONORABLE EWING WERLEIN, JR.	
8	UNITED STATES DIST	RICT JUDGE
9		
10	<u>APPEARANCES</u> :	
11		2. JIM McALISTER
12 13	91	ssistant U.S. Attorney 9 Milam ouston, Texas 77002
14		
15		FELA OLIVAREZ
16	21	torney at Law .6 E. Expressway 83 .ite L & M
17		arr, Texas 78577
18		
19		S. KATHY L. METZGER S. Courthouse
20	51	.5 Rusk com 8016
21	Ho	ouston, Texas 77002 .3-250-5208
22		
23		
24	Proceedings recorded by mechanical s	stenography, transcript
25	produced by computer-aided transcription.	

PROCEEDINGS 1 2 THE COURT: No. 09-467 -- beg your pardon, 09-259. This is United States versus Arnoldo Maldonado. 3 MR. McALISTER: Jim McAlister for the government, Your 4 5 Honor. MS. OLIVAREZ: Fela Olivarez, Your Honor, for 6 Defendant Arnoldo Maldonado. 7 8 THE COURT: Thank you. It's my understanding that the defendant wishes 9 to enter a plea of guilty on a superseding information? 10 11 MR. McALISTER: Yes, Your Honor. It's actually a 12 second superseding information. THE COURT: Second superseding information. 13 14 right. I'll ask that he be sworn. 15 THE CASE MANAGER: Raise your right hand. (Arnoldo Maldonado, Defendant, Sworn) 16 THE COURT: You understand now that you're under oath 17 and if you answer any of my questions falsely, your answers may 18 later be used against you in another prosecution for perjury or 19 for making a false statement? 20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 21 THE COURT: The purpose of this hearing is to 22 23 determine two things. First, I need to determine if you're mentally competent to participate in this hearing and 24 understand what is happening here today. Second, I need to 25

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determine whether there is an independent basis in fact to
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    support your plea of guilty to the offense charged against you
    in Count 1 of the information -- of the second criminal
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    information. It's very important, therefore, that you
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   understand my questions to you and anything that either of the
    lawyers may say. If at any time you do not understand what is
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   being said to you, will you ask that it be repeated or
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    rephrased in such a way that you clearly understand before
   giving your response to me?
9
                             Yes, sir.
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             THE DEFENDANT:
             THE COURT: Where is this criminal information?
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             MR. McALISTER: I have a copy, Your Honor.
             THE COURT: Well, is this a -- this says
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    "information," not a second information; is that correct?
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             MR. McALISTER: No, Your Honor, there should be an SS
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   number up at the top.
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             THE COURT: Well, it is an SS number. It's just
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   not --
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             MR. McALISTER: Oh, yes, then it is correct, Your
   Honor.
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             THE COURT: It's not entitled a second --
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22
             MR. McALISTER: Yes, Your Honor.
             THE COURT: -- criminal information. It just calls it
23
24
    information.
                  It would be helpful if you also entitled it
    "Second Criminal Information."
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1	MR. McALISTER: Yes, Your Honor.	
2	THE COURT: All right. Thank you.	
3	All right. What is your full name?	
4	THE DEFENDANT: Arnoldo Maldonado.	
5	THE COURT: How old are you?	
6	THE DEFENDANT: 45.	
7	THE COURT: How far did you go in school?	
8	THE DEFENDANT: Sophomore in college.	
9	THE COURT: Where was that?	
10	THE DEFENDANT: Edinburg, Texas. Pan American	
11	University, I'm sorry.	
12	THE COURT: And have you ever been hospitalized or	
13	treated by a doctor for any type of mental or psychiatric	
14	problem?	
15	THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.	
16	THE COURT: Has any doctor ever suggested that you	
16 17	THE COURT: Has any doctor ever suggested that you need to receive that type of treatment?	
17	need to receive that type of treatment?	
17 18	need to receive that type of treatment? THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.	
17 18 19	need to receive that type of treatment? THE DEFENDANT: No, sir. THE COURT: Have you ever been treated for addiction	
17 18 19 20	need to receive that type of treatment? THE DEFENDANT: No, sir. THE COURT: Have you ever been treated for addiction to drugs or to alcohol?	
17 18 19 20 21	need to receive that type of treatment? THE DEFENDANT: No, sir. THE COURT: Have you ever been treated for addiction to drugs or to alcohol? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.	
17 18 19 20 21 22	need to receive that type of treatment? THE DEFENDANT: No, sir. THE COURT: Have you ever been treated for addiction to drugs or to alcohol? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. THE COURT: When was that?	

1	THE COURT: And was it inpatient or outpatient?		
2	THE DEFENDANT: Inpatient.		
3	THE COURT: And how long did it last, the treatment?		
4	THE DEFENDANT: Three weeks.		
5	THE COURT: And then you were discharged?		
6	THE DEFENDANT: Correct.		
7	THE COURT: Was the treatment successful?		
8	THE DEFENDANT: First time it wasn't. The second time		
9	it was.		
10	THE COURT: Then you went in for treatment again?		
11	THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir.		
12	THE COURT: When was that?		
13	THE DEFENDANT: About a year afterwards.		
14	THE COURT: Same place?		
15	THE DEFENDANT: Same place.		
16	THE COURT: And how long were you then treated?		
17	THE DEFENDANT: Also three weeks.		
18	THE COURT: And what year was that?		
19	THE DEFENDANT: A year after, about '97.		
20	THE COURT: And have you stayed dried since?		
21	THE DEFENDANT: Uh-huh. Yes, sir. I'm sorry.		
22	THE COURT: Have you taken any kind of medication,		
23	pills have you been told that you need to receive any other		
24	kind of treatment for any of these addictions?		
25	THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.		

THE COURT: Have you taken any kind of medication, 1 2 pills or narcotic drugs of any type within the last 48 hours? 3 THE DEFENDANT: No, sir. THE COURT: Have you consumed any alcoholic beverage 4 5 within the last 24 hours? THE DEFENDANT: 6 No, sir. 7 THE COURT: Are you well-rested and of clear mind this 8 morning? 9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. THE COURT: Is there any reason that you can think of 10 why you would not be able to understand what is happening here 11 12 today? No, Your Honor. 13 THE DEFENDANT: 14 THE COURT: Have you been able to confer with your 15 lawyer again this morning before this hearing began? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 16 17 THE COURT: Have you received a copy of this second criminal information? 18 19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 20 THE COURT: And have you read it? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 21 THE COURT: Have you been over it with your lawyer? 22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 23 24 THE COURT: Have you talked about the case in general with your lawyer?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. 1 2 THE COURT: About how many times have you talked with 3 your lawyer about this case? Several times. 4 THE DEFENDANT: 5 THE COURT: How many? 6 THE DEFENDANT: Several. 7 Several. Are you fully satisfied with the THE COURT: 8 counsel and representation and advice given to you by your lawyer? 9 Yes, Your Honor. 10 THE DEFENDANT: THE COURT: Now, there's a waiver of an indictment in 11 the file here signed by you before Judge John Froeschner, was 12 it? 13 14 THE DEFENDANT: Correct. 15 THE COURT: On September 24? 16 THE DEFENDANT: Correct, Your Honor. 17 THE COURT: And he explained to you at that time your 18 right to have this charge referred to a grand jury? 19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. THE COURT: You understand that a grand jury is 20 composed of at least 16 and not more than 23 people and that 12 21 of them would all have to unanimously agree, at least 12, in 22 order for you to have an indictment returned against you? 23 24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 25 THE COURT: Do you understand that the grand jury,

therefore, if it heard the evidence may or may not indict you? 1 2 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 3 THE COURT: That you have the right to have this referred to a grand jury for consideration, you understand? 4 5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 6 THE COURT: And you're choosing -- you chose to waive 7 that right? 8 THE DEFENDANT: Correct, Your Honor. THE COURT: And is that still your decision today? 9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 10 THE COURT: And you've talked with your lawyer about 11 12 that? Yes, Your Honor. 13 THE DEFENDANT: 14 THE COURT: All right. Now, I've been told, then, 15 that you intend to plead guilty on this criminal information and I want to ask whether anyone has made any kind of promise 16 to you or assurance of any kind in order to persuade you or 17 induce you to plead guilty in this case? 18 19 THE DEFENDANT: No, Your Honor. THE COURT: Has the government or anybody else coerced 20 you or threatened you or in any way attempted to force you to 21 plead guilty in this case? 22 23 THE DEFENDANT: No, Your Honor. 24 THE COURT: Do you understand that the offense to which you're proposing to plead quilty is a felony offense?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Excuse me just a moment.

And, therefore, because it is a felony offense, if your plea is accepted, you will be adjudged guilty of that offense and that such adjudication may deprive you of valuable civil rights, such as the right to vote, the right to hold public office, the right to serve on a jury, the right to possess any kind of firearms, and if you're not a citizen of the United States could adversely affect your immigration status in the United States. Do you understand that those are all probable consequences of pleading guilty?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Have you talked with your lawyer about what the maximum penalty is for the offense charged against you in this second criminal information?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Let me go over that with you. In this matter you're charged with conspiracy to receive and sell stolen goods in violation of federal law. Before a jury -- this offense carries with it an offense of not -- rather, a term in prison of not more than five years in prison; a fine not to exceed \$250,000; a term of not more than three years of supervised release; and a special assessment of \$100. Has all of that been explained to you?

THE DEFENDANT: Correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And when I talk about supervised release, 1 2 I'm talking about the condition of supervision that exists when one leaves prison there are certain conditions imposed, such as 3 not committing another federal, state, or local crime; not 4 5 possessing any kind of illegal controlled substance; and other And if any of those conditions is broken, then a 6 conditions. judge upon hearing may set aside your release and order you 7 8 back to prison for up to two more years in prison just for having broken a term of supervised release. Do you understand? 9 THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor. 10 THE COURT: So you see then what the possible 11 12

THE COURT: So you see then what the possible consequences may be of your plea of guilty to this particular crime in terms of what the maximum possible sentence could be?

Correct.

THE COURT: You also understand that in the federal system there's no parole? So, in other words, if you are sentenced to a time in prison, you have to serve that time and cannot get out early on parole. Do you understand?

THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Have you talked with your lawyer about how the U.S. Sentencing Commission Guidelines may apply to the sentencing in your case?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

THE DEFENDANT:

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THE COURT: Do you understand that the guidelines are important in terms of a beginning point in the assessment of a

just sentence, but that they are advisory, they're not mandatory, and therefore the Court may impose a sentence that is more severe or that is less severe than what is called for by the guidelines? Do you understand?

THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And, also, under some circumstances you or the government would have the right to appeal to a higher court any sentence that I impose.

THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you also understand that if the government makes a recommendation for leniency and I don't follow their advice, as I sometimes do not do, that you still have to stand by your plea of guilty and would not be able to withdraw it?

THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. And you have a right to plead not guilty and if you plead not guilty and persist in that plea, then you would have a right to a trial by jury, during which you would also have the right to the assistance of counsel for your defense, the right to see and hear all of the witnesses and have them cross-examined in your defense, the right on your own part to decline to testify unless you voluntarily elected to do so in your own defense, and the right to the issuance of subpoenas or compulsory process to compel the attendance of witnesses to come to court and testify in

your defense. Do you understand that under our system you would have all of those rights if you pled not guilty?

THE DEFENDANT: I understand that.

THE COURT: But by entering a plea of guilty, if I accept your plea, then there will be no trial and you will have waived and given up your right to a trial as well as all of those other rights associated with a trial that I just described to you. Do you understand?

THE DEFENDANT: I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Let me explain to you now the essential elements of the offense for which you've been charged. You've been charged with conspiracy to receive and sell stolen goods, in violation of federal law. First, let me explain to you what the elements are of that crime that you have been charged -- where it's charged that you have conspired to have that crime committed.

The underlying crime is for the receipt and sale of stolen goods. In order for one to be convicted of that offense, it would need -- the government would need to prove that, one, the property was stolen or unlawfully converted; Two, such property had crossed a state or United States boundary after being stolen or unlawfully converted; three, that the defendant charged received or concealed, sold or deposed of items of the stolen property; four, that the defendant knew the property was stolen or unlawfully converted

at the time that defendant received it or concealed it or sold it or deposed of it; and, five, that those items had a value of \$5,000 or more.

Now, you're charged with conspiracy to commit that crime, to receive and sell stolen goods. Before a jury could convict you of this crime charged against you in Count 2 -- rather, in Count 1 of the second superseding information, the government would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt: One, that you and at -- that two or more persons made an agreement to commit that crime I described to you of receiving, possessing, or selling stolen goods as charged in the information; two, that you knew of that agreement and of its unlawful purpose and joined in it willfully, that is, with the intent to further its unlawful purpose; and, three, that one of the conspirators during -- at least one of the conspirators during the existence of the conspiracy committed at least one of the overt acts described in the information in order to accomplish some object or purpose of the conspiracy.

Do you understand that those are the elements of the offense charged against you in Count 1 of the second superseding information?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I understand, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Then I'm going ask the government to state what facts it's prepared to prove if you choose to plead not guilty. I want you to listen to what the

government counsel has to say and then while you're still under oath, I'm going ask you about these things.

Mr. McAlister.

MR. McALISTER: Thank you, Your Honor.

In 2007 the government of Mexico provided U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement with information regarding numerous companies and individuals that were involved in the smuggling of stolen petroleum products, such as natural gas condensate from Mexico into the United States.

An ICE investigation into the claim by Mexico revealed -- and excuse me for my pronunciations, Your Honor -- Petroleos Mexicanos, which is PEMEX, the national Mexican oil company, Mexico and PEMEX stated that they were the only legal owners and exporters of condensate into the United States from Mexico.

The further investigation by ICE revealed that Mr. Arnoldo Maldonado, the defendant here today, was working with a Mexican company under the name Ygriega --

THE DEFENDANT: Yeah.

MR. McALISTER: -- Energy or Y Oil and Gas is how I say it. Ygriega Energy Company. And that's Y-g-r-i-e-g-a.

The investigation determined that the various

U.S. companies and Mexican companies were working together.

They conspired to import Mexican condensate stolen from PEMEX into the United States. The sold condensate was sold to larger

companies within the United States.

Mr. Maldonado coordinated the delivery of stolen Mexican condensate by semi-tanker trucks. The condensate was brought into the United States from Mexico via a land border port of entry. Mr. Maldonado through Y Oil and Gas coordinated the delivery by tanker trucks to a company in the U.S. called Continental Fuels. It's located inside the Port of Brownsville, Texas.

Under the arrangement Continental Fuels -- this is in '09 specifically, Your Honor. Continental Fuels paid Y Oil and Gas and other companies by wire transfer to bank accounts for the stolen Mexican condensate. Continental Fuels then stored the product until there was a sufficient quantity of condensate to load on a barge and deliver to an end user.

Examples of the imports are as follows: On

January 26th of 2009 the defendant and others arranged for ten

tanker trucks of stolen condensate to be delivered to

Continental Fuels.

On February 27th of 2009 the defendant and others arranged for six tanker trucks of stolen condensate to be delivered to Continental Fuels.

And on March 3rd of 2009 the defendant and others arranged for six tanker trucks of stolen condensate to be delivered to Continental Fuels.

The information was verified through the business

records of Continental Fuels.

Mr. Maldonado and others were responsible for the sale and barqing of the following amounts:

In January of 2009 -- and, Your Honor, the barrel and the values fluctuate a little bit according to the price of the condensate. But about \$244,507 was taken in January of 2009; 544,816 in February of 2009; and 205,696 in March of 2009. About 668,000 of the total figures I just read to the Court was ultimately sent to Mexico. So, Mr. Maldonado's portion would have been the difference between that.

The United States can show that Mr. Maldonado had knowledge that the condensate transactions described, as I just mentioned, involved stolen condensate from Mexico through a series of recorded conversations which took place in 2008 and 2009. In these conversations arrangements for the sale of transport of the condensate were discussed. As an example, in January 6th of 2009, the defendant participated in a telephone conversation with an employee of Continental Fuels in which they discussed the problems involved in the import of stolen condensate through customs and the problems with payoffs that would be required.

THE COURT: All right. You heard what Mr. McAlister has said. Are these facts true?

THE DEFENDANT: Correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Tell me about your own role in this.

THE DEFENDANT: My role in this? 1 2 THE COURT: Yes. THE DEFENDANT: That I would just -- they would report 3 to me how many semi-tankers were going to cross that morning, 4 5 and I would report it to Continental Fuels, how many tankers were going to cross this morning. 6 7 THE COURT: Where were you living? 8 THE DEFENDANT: I live in Edinburg, Texas, sir. THE COURT: And your company is which company? 9 THE DEFENDANT: Ygriega Energy Company, Y Gas and Oil. 10 THE COURT: And, so, how were they stealing the 11 12 condensate from PEMEX? THE DEFENDANT: I have no idea on that, sir. 13 THE COURT: You just knew it was stolen on those 14 15 trucks when they were coming in, the tanker trucks coming in? I did not make any kind of 16 THE DEFENDANT: 17 arrangements to cross trucks over or get the paperwork on that. They were in charge of taking care of all of that. 18 19 THE COURT: But how would you get the information on 20 what number of trucks were coming? THE DEFENDANT: Somebody would call me in the morning 21 and let me know how many trucks were ready to cross. 22 23 THE COURT: All right. And, so, you knew those were 24 the trucks with the stolen condensate? 25 THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. Yeah, I quess.

THE COURT: And then what would you do with that 1 2 information? THE DEFENDANT: I would call Continental Fuels and let 3 them know how many trucks were on their way over there. 4 5 THE COURT: All right. Now, in this telephone conversation on January 6th about the problems involved in 6 7 importing stolen condensate, what are some of the problems that 8 you were talking about? THE DEFENDANT: The problems was like somebody in the 9 bridge was not cooperating with the people in Mexico. 10 THE COURT: And, so, what would be done to those? 11 12 THE DEFENDANT: That was in their hands. I mean, sometimes they would request not to go. 13 14 THE COURT: And why did they need that cooperation of 15 somebody on the bridge? 16 THE DEFENDANT: I quess -- I quess to process papers. 17 I'm guessing. I wasn't involved in that side of it, Your Honor, on the transaction. 18 19 THE COURT: And this condensate was right up into the hundreds of thousands of dollars of fuel then? 20 THE DEFENDANT: I imagine, yes, sir. 21 THE COURT: Well, you're in the business, aren't you? 22 23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. I'm not into the refining 24 product business. I'm more in the motor oil business than the 25 oil refine business.

THE COURT: What business? 1 2 THE DEFENDANT: On the motor oil business. Motor oil. THE COURT: Motor oil? 3 4 THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. Yes, Your Honor. 5 THE COURT: All right. Well, condensate is pretty valuable, isn't it? 6 7 Yes. Yes, sir. THE DEFENDANT: 8 THE COURT: You suppose that many trucks would have hundreds of thousands of dollars of condensate on them, 9 wouldn't you? 10 11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, sir. 12 THE COURT: Is there any other advice I need to give to the defendant under Rule 11, Ms. Olivarez? 13 14 MS. OLIVAREZ: No, Your Honor. 15 THE COURT: Do you know of any reason why the defendant would not be competent to enter a knowing and 16 17 voluntary plea or any reason he should not enter a plea of 18 quilty? 19 I do not, Your Honor. MS. OLIVAREZ: 20 THE COURT: All right. Then, Mr. Arnoldo Maldonado, how do you plead to the charge set forth against you in Count 1 21 of the second criminal information, quilty or not quilty? 22 23 THE DEFENDANT: Guilty, Your Honor. 24 THE COURT: It is the finding of the Court in the case of United States of America versus Arnoldo Maldonado that the

defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea and that his plea of guilty is a knowing and voluntary plea supported by an independent basis in fact containing each of the essential elements of the charged offense. The defendant's plea of guilty is therefore accepted, and Defendant Maldonado is now adjudged guilty of the offense charged against him in Count 1 of the second criminal information.

A written presentence report will now be prepared for me to assist me in the sentencing process. You will be asked to give information for the report and your lawyer may be present with you if you wish for her to be so. It's very important that you furnish full and accurate information. A failure to do so can be used as a basis to increase the guidelines range. You and your lawyer will also be permitted to read the presentence report from the probation officer before the sentencing hearing, and you and your lawyer will also have an opportunity to speak in your behalf at the sentencing hearing.

The initial report is due November 9.

Objections, if any, or a statement that there are none will be filed by November 23rd. The final report is due December 7.

And sentencing is set for January 8, 2010, at 10:30 a.m.

The defendant has been on terms of release heretofore?

MR. McALISTER: Yes, Your Honor. He surrendered 1 2 yesterday. He's known about the charges since March. We would ask that he be allowed to remain on bond under the same 3 4 conditions. 5 THE COURT: All right. Do you remember what the magistrate judge advised about your bond, the conditions? 6 7 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 8 THE COURT: And I'm going to -- the government has agreed and it has been requested I'm sure by the defendant, I'm 9 going to permit you to continue -- you'll be on bond. You will 10 be required to comply with all of those conditions and make all 11 12 appearances, including the sentencing hearing. Do you understand? 13 14 Yes, Your Honor. THE DEFENDANT: 15 THE COURT: Is there anything further today? MR. McALISTER: Nothing further, Your Honor. 16 17 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. That concludes this hearing then. 18 19 MS. OLIVAREZ: Thank you. 20 MR. McALISTER: Thank you. THE COURT: The court will be in recess. 21 22 (Concluded at 11:45 a.m.) 23 24 I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the 25 record of proceedings in the above-entitled cause, to the best

1	of my ability.
2	
3	/s/ <u>Xathy L. Metager</u> 10-19-09 Kathy L. Metzger Date Official Court Reporter
4	Kathy L. Metzger Date Official Court Reporter
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